(b) what steps Government have so far taken to deal with the problem of fires in Jharia; mines and

(c) what is the quantity of coal reserves blocked and damaged due to these fires during each of the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) to (c) The main problem of fires exist in Jharia Coalfield of Bharat Coking Coal Limited. It is difficult to make precise estimate of loss of coal reserves caused by these fires during last years. However, about four years ago, the coal company had estimated that coal reserves to an extent of about 37 million tonnes might have been damaged in these fires. Coal reseves damaged in these fires would be of the order of Rs. 1,100 crores at 1989 prices. The World Bank has since agreed to provide financial and technical assistance or a diagnostic study for development of programme to deal with the coalfield fires. I.D.A. credit for US dollar 12 million has recently been approved for the Technical Assistance Project.

Danger faced by Raniganj township

2314. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH;
SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to an article published in the 'Sunday Observer' of January 10—16, 1993, under the heading "Raniganj Coalfields Subsidence—a disaster waiting to happen";

(b) if so, what are the facts in this regard;

(c) whether it is a fact that the concerned State Governments of West Bengal and Bihar are not taking the responsibility for development works in Raniganj area, if so, what are the facts and the reasons therefor;

(d) whether it is a fact that a major portion ofcess and royalty have been taken away from the State Governments by the Centre; and

(e) if so, what are the facts and detals in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. An incidence of surface subsidence in the Harishpur area near Dhandadih Openeast project and occurred on 14-12-1992. The area involved erstwhile Madhabpur colliery which was reported to have been abandoned by erstwhile private owners prior to 1940s. This area was declared unsafe by a Committee set up by the Government in 1978.

(c) Major subsidence prone areas are located in Raniganj coalfield in the State of West Bengal. In other coalfields, there are not too many areas which can be considered as unsafe. In the State of Bihar, the problem is that of coalfield fires in Jharia coalfield. Effective steps are being taken to deal with it.

So far as subsidene aspect is concerned, the State Government of West Bengal had enacted a legislation for prevention of construction of the areas declared unsafe. An Apex Monitoring Committee constituted by Coal India Limited for examination of unsafe areas has completed the survey and declared certain localities in Raniganj coalfield as unsafe for habitation. Central Mine Planning and Design Institute has taken up formulation of schemes for dealing with each unsafe locality subject to availability of funds.

(d) and (e) No, Sir. However, some adjustments of dues towards supply of coal to public utilities of State Governments are being made

by the coal companies from out of Cess|royalty payable by coal companies to State Government by mutual agreement.

Lack of infrastructure in coal companies

2315. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the major coal companies in the public sector lack in infrastructure to transport coal to consumption centres resulting in mounting pithead stocks; and

(b) if so, what steps are proposed to be taken to plan a proper production distribution method?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) and (b) Coal companies do not transport coal beyond despatch points. Coal is finally transported to the consumption centre by rail, merry go round, belt, rope or road etc. Except for railways, these systems could be captive or privately owned.

It is a fact that due to the mismatch between the production and the transport capacities in some of the coal production areas Coal stocks have been mounting up. In order to improve despatches and liquidate these stocks, coal companies are improving their coordination efforts with railways. To improve the off-take by road, two schemes have been formulated for selling coal under the Liberalised Sale Scheme (LSS). LSS-I for small buyers requiring coal from one truck to 1000 tonnes while LSS-II is for major buyers requiring 10,000 tonnes and above. Coal India Limited have also recently launched a scheme for developing wholesale trade in coal. Under this scheme, the subsidy companies of Coal India Limited will appoint wholesale traders on the basis of applications invited through open advertisements. It is stipulated that each dealer shall lift atleast 3000 tonnes of coal per month by road.

Production and import of coal

2316. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Ministe of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total production, demand, sale of coal in terms of quantity and value for the past five years, year-wise;

(b) whether it is a fact that in spite of significant increase in coal production, import of coal has been on the increase;

(c) if so, what are the details of quantity of coal imported during the last three years, year-wise and expenditure incurred thereon including permission granted for import of coal during the current year and likely expenses thereon;

(d) what steps are being taken/ proposed to achieve self sufficiency in coal and reduce coal imports during the Eighth Five Year Plan;

(e) whether Government have assigned import of coal to agencies having no expertise in the line ignoring the claim of MMTC and Coal India Limited; and

(f) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) The figures of coal production, production value, despatches and sale value of Coal India Limited and Singareni Collieries Company Limited during the last five years are given in the attached Statement. (*See* below)